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# DO 670 United Methodist Theology

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DO 670 UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGY  
1:00 – 2:50 TUESDAY  
ROOM M202  
SPRING 2003  
DR. LARRY WOOD, PROFESSOR

*CATALOG DESCRIPTION*

A survey of Methodist theology after Wesley to the present with a special focus upon its American developments. Assuming an understanding of Wesley's thought, the course traces doctrinal distinctives in both the United Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren heritages. Theological traditions will be studied through representative theologians in the Wesleyan tradition.

*GOALS*

Upon the completion of this course, students will:

1. Be acquainted with some of the representative theological trends, movements, and theologians within United Methodism;
2. Be encouraged to see the relevance of theology for pastoral and denominational leadership in the United Methodist Church;
3. Be equipped with categories that are necessary for engaging in serious theological dialog with peers and colleagues;
4. Be able to apply appropriate and relevant theological reflection in sermon preparation;
5. Be able to evaluate recent developments in Methodist theology in the light of Wesley's sermons, *Notes*, and *Articles of Religion*;
6. Be familiar with recent relevant theological trends, movements, and theologians outside of the United Methodist tradition;
7. Be inspired (hopefully) to enjoy the responsibility of thinking theologically. What an awesome gift God has given humanity by endowing us with the capacity to understand and to know each other and to know him! Through the appropriation of categories (thought-forms), we are enabled to understand the shared experiences of life in general and of our experience of God in particular. Spirituality and the capacity of the mind to think go together in hand.

*COURSE EXPECTATIONS*

1. Class attendance is expected. Unexcused absences may result in a grade reduction.
2. Each student will invest between five and six hours per week in outside preparation for this class, as stipulated by the ATS Catalog (see section entitled "Academic Information," subsection, "Preparation").
3. Each student will read carefully all assigned readings.
4. Class time will be spent in presenting different ideas, movements, and theologians, which one would expect to encounter in the United Methodist ministry.
5. Students will write one page, singled-spaced theological reflection papers on each of the assigned chapters in the required texts and the required selected readings on the Library Reserve Shelf, including Post-Liberal Theology, Narrative Theology, Social/Ecological Theology, Postmodern Theology, and Science and Theology. These papers will include (1) highlights of the main ideas, (2) theological evaluation, and (3) personal reflection. These papers will be given to the professor after each class session and will be returned the next week. It is recommended that students keep these in a special notebook binder.
6. Class sessions will be dialogical and interactive. Each student can expect to participate in four panel discussions over the course of the semester. The professor will serve as moderator and resource person. Each panel will consist of two students and professor. Students serving on the panels will expand their theological reflection papers to include a more detailed analysis of the readings and will raise questions and issues, which should be discussed by the whole class.
7. Each student will write a ten-page research paper on a contemporary theological trend, such as Trinitarian theology, process theology, narrative theology, liturgical theology,

Latin American liberation theology, Afro-American theology, Pentecostal/Charismatic theology, the Confessing Movement, feminist theology, theology of history, ecological theology, science and theology, or the Liturgical Renewal Movement.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

1. David L. Smith, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000). This book provides a survey of the major current theological movements.
2. L. Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism, Rediscovering John Fletcher As John Wesley's Vindicator and Designated Successor* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002). Chapters 11-16, pp. 223-385. Pneumatology has been a central focus of Asbury Theological Seminary since its very beginning. This corresponds to its emphasis upon Christian perfection. This book shows that the baptism with the Spirit and Pentecostal terminology were widely used in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Methodism. The last chapters of this book explore this theme in Methodist history since Wesley. The first half of this book is about John Fletcher "pentecostalizing" John Wesley's theology and it serves as a text in DO690. An assumption of this book is that spiritual vitality in United Methodism depends upon an adequate theology of the Holy Spirit, which can be preached and lived.
3. Selected Readings on the Library Reserve Shelf.

#### RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

Ted Campbell, President of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, has put on a website an excellent book on ecumenical consensus on central Christian teachings. I recommend this to you very highly. <http://www.christianmysteries.info/>

#### WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

##### FEB. 11 – EVANGELICAL LIBERALISM AND THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- Albert C. Outler, "Introduction to the Report of the 1968-72 Theological Study Commission," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A. Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), pp. 19-25. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- Richard P. Heitzenrater, "At Full Liberty: Doctrinal Standards in Early American Methodism," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 109-124. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- Ted A. Campbell, "The 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral': The Story of A Modern Methodist Myth," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 154-161. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- Albert Outler, "Our Theological Task" in the 1972 *Book of Discipline* ¶168. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- Bishop Earl Hunt, "Our Theological Task," ¶163 in the 1988 *Book of Discipline*, which was written under the chairmanship of Bishop Earl Hunt (with Dr. Kenneth Kinghorn as one of the writers). (Library Reserve Shelf).

##### FEB. 18 – THE GOOD NEWS MOVEMENT AND THE CONFESSING MOVEMENT (PANEL #1)

- James V. Heidinger II, *United Methodist Renewal* (Wilmore, KY: Forum for Scriptural Christianity, 1988). (Library Reserve Shelf).
- "A Confessional Statement" and "Doctrinal Tracts" of the Confessing Movement. These can be downloaded from website: <http://www.confessingumc.org/index.htm>
- Wesley, "The Catholic Spirit" (Sermon 39). This sermon can be downloaded from website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/>
- Dr. Jim Heidinger will be our guest.

##### FEB. 25 – THEOLOGY IN EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM (PANELS #2, #3)

- Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, chapters 13-14, pp. 293-336. For those who took ST501 during the Fall Semester, Thomas Langford, *Practical Divinity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 1:43-115 (Library Reserve Shelf) is recommended as optional reading.

#### MARCH 4 – BASIC CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGIES

- ❑ Fundamentalism, *Handbook of Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), pp. 11-26. (Panel #4).
- ❑ Neo-Orthodoxy, *Handbook*, pp. 27-40. (Panel #5).
- ❑ Pentecostalism, *Handbook*, pp. 41-57. (Panel #6).
  - Optional: Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven, The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading: Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), pp.99-123. (Library Reserve Shelf).
  - Recommended website on the emergence of Pentecostalism by a Pentecostal writer:

<http://www.inchistalone.org/RevivalismToPentecostalism.htm>

- ❑ Evangelicalism, *Handbook*, pp. 58-71. (Panel #7).

#### MARCH 11 – BASIC CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGIES (CON'T)

- ❑ Neo-Liberalism, *Handbook*, pp. 72-86. (Panel #8).
  - Optional: Carl Michalson, *Worldly Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1967), pp. 127-158. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- ❑ Post-Vatican II Catholicism, *Handbook*, pp. 87-102. (Panel #9)
- ❑ Easter Orthodox Theologies, *Handbook*, pp. 103-116. (Panel #10)
- ❑ The Charismatic Movement, *Handbook*, pp. 117-132. (Panel #11)

#### MARCH 18 – CONTEMPORARY WORLD TRENDS IN THEOLOGY

- ❑ The Theology of Hope, *Handbook*, pp. 135-149. (Panel #12)
- ❑ Process Theology, *Handbook*, pp. 150-164. (Panel #13)
  - Recommended: John Cobb, *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 67-102. The entire book is on the web:

[http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showbook?item\\_id=373](http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showbook?item_id=373)

- ❑ Secular Theology, *Handbook*, pp. 165-178. (Panel #14)

#### MARCH 25 – CONTEMPORARY WORLD TRENDS IN THEOLOGY (CON'T)

- ❑ Theologies of Success, *Handbook*, pp. 179-202 (Panel #15)
- ❑ Liberation Theology, *Handbook*, pp. 203-226 (Panel #16)
  - Optional: J. Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 2-83. (Library Reserve Shelf).
  - Optional: James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), pp. 55-81. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- ❑ Third Wave Theology: The Vineyard Movement, *Handbook*, pp. 227-240. (Panel #17).

#### APRIL 1 – CONTEMPORARY WORLD TRENDS IN THEOLOGY (CON'T)

- ❑ Feminist Theology, *Handbook*, pp. 241-258. (Panel #18)
  - Optional: Sandra M. Schneiders, "Does the Bible Have A Postmodern Message," in *Postmodern Theology*, ed. Frederic B. Burnham (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), pp. 56-73. (Library Reserve Shelf).
  - Optional: Rosemary Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), pp. 116-138. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- ❑ The New Age Movement, *Handbook*, pp. 273-291. (Panel #19)
- ❑ Some Third World Theological Directions, *Handbook*, pp. 306-317. (Panel #20)

#### APRIL 15 – POSTLIBERAL THEOLOGY

- ❑ George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 7-19. (Library Reserve Shelf). (Panel #21)

#### APRIL 15 – NARRATIVE THEOLOGY (PANEL #22)

- ❑ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981), pp. 1-6; 196-229. (Library Reserve Shelf).
- ❑ Stanley Hauerwas, "Abortion, Theologically Understood," (1991), *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 603-622. (Library Reserve Shelf).

APRIL 22 – A SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY (PANEL #23)

- ❑ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 289-309.
- ❑ Moltmann, *God in Creation, A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 1-40.
- ❑ Ian Barbour, "Religion in An Environmental Age," *Earth At Risk* (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), pp. 27-53.

APRIL 22 – POSTMODERNISM (PANEL #24)

- ❑ James Miller, "The Emerging Postmodern World," *Postmodern Theology*, pp. 1-19.

APRIL 29 – SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY (PANEL #25)

- ❑ Ted Peters, "Theology and Natural Science," in *The Modern Theologians*, ed. David F. Ford (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 649-665. This essay offers eight ways of relating science and theology.
- ❑ Highly recommended: an online adaptation of *God, Humanity, and the Cosmos*, ed. Christopher Southgate (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999);  
<http://www.counterbalance.net/ghc/index-frame.html>
- ❑ For interviews with leading scientists, philosophers, and theologians on the relation between science and faith, see this PBS website on "Faith and Reason"  
<http://www.counterbalance.com/transcript/index-frame.html>

MAY 6 – WESLEYAN HOLINESS THEOLOGY (PANEL #26, #27)

- ❑ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost*, Chapters 11, 12, pp. 223-292.

Optional: Langford, "Holiness Theology," *Practical Divinity*, pp. 131-146. Recommended for those who took ST501. Langford says: "The relationship between these two founding fathers [Wesley and Fletcher] is still under investigation" (p. 141) and that the relation between Christian perfection and the use of Pentecostal language is still "not settled" (p. 146) in Wesley Studies. *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* is the first study that researched this theme in depth and was concluded after Langford's book was written.

MAY 13 -- RECENT LITURGICAL/THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS – THE NEW BAPTISMAL LITURGY (Panels #28, #29).

- ❑ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost*, Chapters 15, 16, pp. 337-385.
- ❑ Optional: "By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism." You may download this from the United Methodist Church website:  
<http://www.gbod.org/worship/images/water&spirit.pdf>. This document is also available on the library reserve shelf, *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* (1996), pp. 716-735. Recommended as substitute reading for those who were in ST501 last semester.